

SC470645

Registered provider: SureCare Residential Limited – The White Trees Group

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider. It provides care for up to 5 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, 5 children were living at the home. The inspector spoke with 4 children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2023.

The inspector was aware during this inspection that the appropriate authorities were investigating a child protection allegation. While Ofsted does not investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the allegations were considered alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform the inspector's judgements.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 December 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2025	Full	Good
26/09/2023	Full	Good
27/09/2022	Full	Good
22/07/2021	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Some children have lived in the home for many years, giving them a strong sense of belonging and permanence. All children have made good progress from their individual starting points. Their presence is felt throughout the home, which is full of fun and laughter. Children are proud of their achievements. One child said, 'I love my home,' while another said, 'It's been a rocky few months, but I love home. I love my [name of home] family, and I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.'

Staff are proactive in helping children sustain significant relationships. They organise and support family time, encourage positive friendships and enable children to have friends visit the home. As a result, children are supported to maintain stable and meaningful connections that contribute to their emotional wellbeing.

Staff have a clear understanding of each child's health needs and ensure that they attend routine appointments. When concerns arise, staff liaise with relevant professionals promptly and appropriately, including specialist mental health services, to secure timely and effective support.

Staff prioritise children's education and take time to understand their goals, helping them develop high aspirations. One child who previously struggled with attendance has now received an award for the highest attendance in the area. Another child achieved a distinction in their first year of college, which boosted their confidence and led to further opportunities to share their talents. The child described this as a 'dream come true'. When a child is not in education, the registered manager works with the virtual school and education providers to arrange home tuition and identify suitable provision. As a result, one child who had been out of education for a long period is now consistently attending an alternative provision.

Staff prepare children for moving on from the home sensitively and in line with their individual circumstances. They help children develop independence and social skills and provide support throughout the move to their new home. Children's time in the home is celebrated. One child enjoyed a leaving party with important people and received meaningful gifts and memorabilia. Children reflect positively on the impact of living in the home and often stay in touch after leaving.

Children new to the home are welcomed sensitively. Children already living in the home are actively involved in the process. Recently, they prepared letters and photos to help a new child feel welcome. As a result of this warm and inclusive approach, the child has settled well and positive relationships are developing between the children.

Children freely express themselves. Staff engage children in meaningful conversations about their uniqueness and individuality. In addition, staff support

children to explore their identity. Staff offer appropriate challenge to discriminatory views and encourage understanding. As a result, children feel empowered to be themselves, making the home an inclusive space.

Staff support children to explore and develop their individual hobbies and interests, such as painting and knitting. They also provide a wide range of enriching activities, including trips to theme parks and visits to the cinema. Staff help children celebrate special events, creating positive and memorable experiences. On one occasion, staff shared in one child's enjoyment of their prom, and they gave the child a charm for a bracelet as a gift. Another child spoke positively about their experience at Ladies' Day and the pamper session where they had their hair and makeup professionally done.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager and the core staff understand the risks to children in their care. There are multi-agency teams around each child, and regular meetings take place to discuss them. However, the children's risk assessments and plans do not fully reflect what staff are worried about or provide staff with guidance on how to keep children safer.

Two children who moved into the home since the last inspection have had frequent incidents of going missing for significant periods. This was an area of risk that staff and the registered manager were unfamiliar with, highlighting gaps in knowledge and practice. Following these incidents, there has been considerable learning and reflection on practice. However, on 2 occasions, staff did not take immediate action, leaving children at risk. In addition, the home's missing-from-home protocols are confusing and do not fully align with children's individual care plans, which has affected the consistency of responses.

Since one child moved out, there has been a gradual reduction in children going missing. This coincides with more positive relationships developing between children and the adults who care for them. Children are increasingly able to confide in staff about their plans for the day and are returning home as agreed, demonstrating improved trust and relationships with adults in the home.

Overall, the home provides a pleasant and safe environment for children to live in. However, during the inspection, it was identified that the means to escape in the event of a fire during the night were insufficient. Leaders acknowledged this and took immediate action to address the practice. Assurances were also provided that this practice would be reviewed across the wider services provided by the organisation. In addition, there were broken and damaged window restrictors throughout and a worn carpet, which the registered manager intends to replace.

Children are supported to keep themselves safe. Staff have conversations with children to educate them about online safety and other important issues, such as

healthy relationships and smoking. In addition, staff provide children with clear and consistent boundaries. As a result, the overall risks to children are starting to reduce.

The registered manager prioritises the safety and protection of children. When there are concerns raised about staff, she takes these seriously. The registered manager and staff engage with external safeguarding professionals, such as the local authority designated officer and the police.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager and her core staff said that this has been a challenging period. There has been a high turnover of staff over the past 6 months, leaving a depleted team. Despite this, the registered manager and core staff have pulled together, working additional hours over extended periods to provide stability for the children and to ensure that their experiences remain positive.

Children report that they have staff in the home that they can talk to. However, some also said that they have lost trust at times due to the changes in staff. One child described the registered manager as their 'biggest cheerleader'.

The registered manager has remained committed and focused on prioritising the day-to-day experiences of the children. No additional support was provided by senior leaders, despite an internal audit identifying shortfalls and the significant hours the registered manager is spending directly with the children.

Staff enjoy working at the home, speak about the children with warmth and affection and report feeling well supported. The registered manager ensures that all staff receive practice-related supervision sessions, including additional support when there are concerns about staff wellbeing. However, this level of support is not replicated for the registered manager, who has received limited support herself.

The quality of records within the home is inconsistent. This inconsistency is evident in both the content and the legibility of records. Some records are detailed, accurate, and clearly presented, providing a clear account of children's care. However, others lack sufficient detail, are difficult to read, or are incomplete, which can hinder effective monitoring, oversight and the evaluation of children's experiences.

Team meetings are held regularly and often include training sessions or the involvement of the wellbeing lead. However, due to staff shortages and senior leaders arranging other meetings, attendance is not always consistent. Additionally, records of these meetings are inconsistent, meaning that staff who are unable to attend are not always fully updated on discussions, decisions and agreed actions. This limits the effectiveness of communication and can affect the continuity of care for children.

The registered manager works well with other professionals, and feedback about her communication is positive. Staff consistently attend meetings and act as strong advocates for the children.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(d))	31 May 2026
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—	31 May 2026

lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;

ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; and

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(e)(h))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the manager receives supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that the staff, including the manager, are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under The Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC470645

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: SureCare Residential Limited – The White Trees Group

Registered provider address: The Old Snap Factory, Twyford Industrial Estate,
Twyford Road, Bishops Stortford CM23 3LJ

Responsible individual: Emma Barr

Registered manager: Rachel Ranner

Inspector

Claire Webster, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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